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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to provide parents of elementary and junior high school students with an understanding the purpose and nature of homework and suggestions for helping their children complete homework assignments successfully. After a discussion of why teachers assign homework, how homework can help children learn, and the optimum amount of homework for students at different grade levels, the booklet provides specific suggestions for parents to help their children complete homework assignments, including setting a regular time for homework, picking a quiet place, removing distractions, providing appropriate supplies and resources, setting a good example, and showing interest in their homework. It also discusses ways for parents to monitor their children's homework assignments, provide guidance to their children on assignments, and talk with teachers or administrators about homework problems. A checklist on helping children with homework is included. (MDM)

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Helping Your Child With Homework

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Helping Your Child With Homework

for parents of elementary and junior high school-aged children

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September 1995

Foreword

Families play a vital role in educating America's children. What families *do* is more important to student success than whether they are rich or poor, whether parents have finished high school or not, or whether children are in elementary, junior high, or high school.

Yet, for all that common sense and research tell us, family involvement often remains neglected in the debate about American school reform. To focus more attention on this important subject, the U.S. Congress recently added to an initial list of six National Education Goals another that states:

> Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement has produced *Helping Your Child With Homework* to contribute to the drive to increase family involvement in children's learning. As the handbook points out, we know that children who spend more time on homework, on average, do better in school, and that the academic benefits increase as children move into the upper grades.

But the value of homework extends beyond school. We know that good assignments, completed successfully, can help children develop wholesome habits and attitudes. Homework can help parents learn about their children's education and communicate both with their children and the schools. And it can encourage a lifelong love of learning.

In addition to helping with homework, there are many other important ways that parents can help their children learn. Parents can encourage children to spend more leisure time reading than watching television. They can talk with their children and communicate positive behaviors, values, and character traits. They can keep in touch with the school. And they can express high expectations for children and encourage their efforts to achieve.

We hope *Helping Your Child With Homework* can lead all of you facing the challenges of raising children one step closer to success. Indeed, family involvement in education is crucial if we want our children to succeed in school and throughout life.

Sharon P. Robinson
Assistant Secretary
Office of Educational Research
and Improvement

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Homework: A Concern for the Whole Family

Homework is an opportunity for students to learn and for parents to be involved in their children's education. A parent's interest can spark enthusiasm in a child and help teach the most important lesson of all—that learning can be fun and is well worth the effort.

However, helping your child with homework isn't always easy. At PTA meetings and at parent-teacher conferences, mothers and fathers ask:

- How can I get Michael to do his homework? Every night it's a struggle to get him to turn off the television and do his homework.

- Why isn't Maria getting more homework? (Why is Jonathan getting so much homework?)

- When is Tanya supposed to do homework? She takes piano lessons, sings in her church choir, plays basketball, and helps with family chores. There's hardly any time left to study.

- How can I help Robert with his math homework when I don't understand it?

- Do homework assignments really help my child learn?

This book helps answer these questions—and many others—that parents and others who care for children in elementary and junior high school often ask about homework. Included are practical ideas for helping children complete homework assignments successfully. Some of the ideas in this book may also be helpful for high school students.

The Basics

Before discussing ways you can help your child with homework, it is important to discuss why teachers assign homework and how it benefits your child.

Why Do Teachers Assign Homework?

Teachers assign homework for many reasons. Homework can help children

- review and practice what they've learned;
- get ready for the next day's class;
- learn to use resources, such as libraries, reference materials, and encyclopedias; and
- explore subjects more fully than time permits in the classroom.

Homework can also help children develop good habits and attitudes. It can

- teach children to work independently;
- encourage self-discipline and responsibility (assignments provide some youngsters with their first chance to manage time and meet deadlines); and
- encourage a love of learning.

Homework can also bring parents and educators closer together. Parents who supervise homework and work with their children on assignments learn about their children's education and about the school.

Homework is meant to be a positive experience and to encourage children to learn. Assignments should not be used as punishment.

Does Homework Help Children Learn?

Homework helps your child do better in school when assignments are meaningful, are completed successfully, and are returned with constructive comments from the teacher. An assignment should have a specific purpose, come with clear instructions, be fairly well matched to a student's abilities, and designed to help develop a student's knowledge and skills.

In the *early elementary grades*, homework can help children develop the habits and attitudes described earlier. From *fourth through sixth grades*, small amounts of homework, gradually increased each year, may support improved academic achievement. In *seventh grade and beyond*, students who complete more homework score better on standardized tests and earn better grades, on the average, than students who do less homework. The difference in test scores and grades between students who do more homework and those who do less increases as children move up through the grades.

What's the Right Amount of Homework?

Many educators believe that homework is most effective for the majority of children in *first through third grades* when it does not exceed 20 minutes each school day. From *fourth through sixth grades*, many

educators recommend from 20 to 40 minutes a school day for most students. For students in *seventh through ninth grades*, generally, up to 2 hours a school day is thought to be suitable.

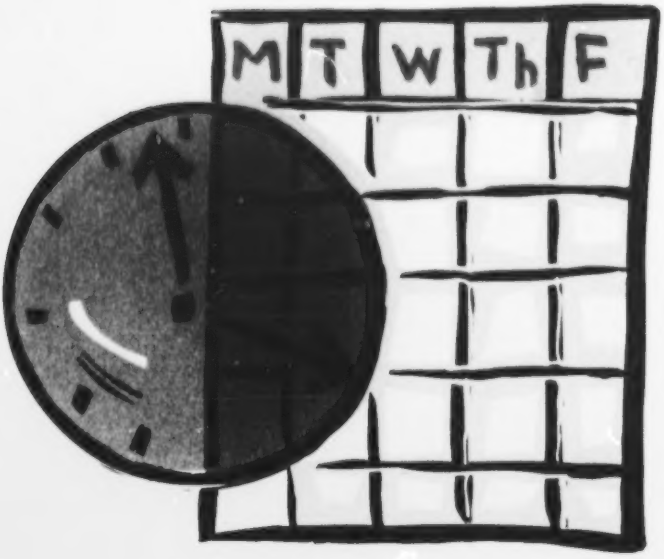
Amounts that vary from these guidelines are fine for some students. Talk with your child's teacher if you are concerned about either too much or too little homework.

How To Help: Show You Think Education and Homework Are Important

Children need to know that their parents and adults close to them think homework is important. If they know their parents care, children have a good reason to complete assignments and turn them in on time. There is a lot that you can do to show that you value education and homework.

Set a Regular Time.

Finding a regular time for homework helps children finish assignments. The best schedule is one that works for your child and your family. What works well in one household may not work in another. Of course, a good schedule depends in part on your child's age, as well as individual needs. For instance, one youngster may work best in the afternoon after an hour of play, and another may be more efficient after dinner (although late at night, when children are tired, is seldom a good time).



Outside activities, such as sports or music lessons, may mean that you need a flexible schedule. Your child may study after school on some days and in the evening on others. If there isn't enough time to finish homework, your child may need to drop some outside activity. Homework must be a high priority.

You'll need to work with your elementary school child to develop a schedule. An older student can probably make up a schedule independently, although you'll want to make sure it's a good one. It may help to write out the schedule and put it in a place where you'll see it often, such as the refrigerator door.

Some families have a required amount of time that children must devote to homework or some other learning activity each school night (the length of time can vary depending upon the child's age). For instance, if your seventh-grader knows she's expected to spend an hour doing homework, reading, or visiting the library, she may be less likely to rush through assignments so that she can watch television. A required amount of time may also discourage her from "forgetting" to bring home assignments and help her adjust to a routine.

Pick a Place.

A study area should have lots of light, supplies close by, and be fairly quiet.

A study area doesn't have to be fancy. A desk in the bedroom is nice, but for many youngsters the kitchen table or a corner of the living room works just fine.

Your child may enjoy decorating a special study corner. A plant, a brightly colored container to hold pencils, and some favorite artwork taped to the walls can make study time more pleasant.

Remove Distractions.

Turn off the television and discourage social telephone calls during homework time. (A call to a classmate about an assignment may, however, be helpful.)

Some youngsters work well with quiet background music, but loud noise from the stereo or radio is not OK. One Virginia junior high school history teacher laments, "I've actually had a kid turn in an assignment that had written in the middle, 'And George Washington said, "Ohhhhh, I love you."' The kid was so plugged into the music that he wasn't concentrating."

If you live in a small or noisy household, try having all family members take part in a quiet activity during homework time. You may need to take a noisy toddler outside or into another room to play. If distractions can't be avoided, your child may want to complete assignments in a nearby library.

Provide Supplies and Identify Resources.

For starters, collect pencils, pens, erasers, writing paper, an assignment book, and a dictionary. Other things that might be helpful include glue, a stapler, paper clips, maps, a calculator, a pencil sharpener, tape, scissors, a ruler, index cards, a thesaurus, and an almanac. Keep these items together in one place if possible. If you can't provide your child with needed supplies, check with the teacher, school guidance counselor, or principal about possible sources of assistance.

For books and other information resources, check with the school library or local public library. Some libraries have homework centers designed especially to assist children with school assignments (there may even be tutors and other kinds of individual assistance).

These days many schools have computers in classrooms, and many households have personal computers. However, you don't have to have a computer in your home in order for your child to complete homework assignments successfully.

You may want to ask the teacher to explain school policy about the use of computers—or typewriters or any special equipment—for homework. Certainly, computers can be a great learning tool and helpful for some assignments. They can be used for word processing and on-line reference resources, as well as educational programs and games to sharpen skills. Some schools may offer after-school programs where your child can use the school computers. And many public libraries make computers available to children.

Set a Good Example.

Children are more likely to study if they see you reading, writing, and doing things that require thought and effort on your part. Talk with your child about what you're reading and writing even if it's something as simple as making the grocery list. Tell them about what you do at work. Encourage activities that support learning—for example, educational games, library visits, walks in the neighborhood, trips to the zoo or museums, and chores that teach a sense of responsibility.

Show an Interest.

Make time to take your child to the library to check out materials needed for homework (and for fun too), and read with your child as often as you can. Talk about school and learning activities in family conversations. Ask your child what was discussed in class that day. If he doesn't have much to say, try another approach. For example, ask your child to read aloud a story he wrote or discuss the results of a science experiment.

Another good way to show your interest is to attend school activities, such as parent-teacher meetings, shows, and sports events. If you can, volunteer to help in the classroom or at special events. Getting to know some classmates and other parents not only shows you're interested but helps build a network of support for you and your child.

How To Help: Monitor Assignments

Children are more likely to complete assignments successfully when parents monitor homework. How closely you need to monitor depends upon the age of your child, how independent she is, and how well she does in school. Whatever the age of your child, if assignments are not getting done satisfactorily, more supervision is needed.

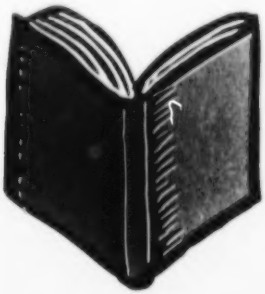
Here are some good ways to monitor assignments:

Ask About the School's Homework Policy.

At the start of the school year, ask the teacher:

- What kinds of assignments will be given?
- How long are children expected to take to complete them?
- How does the teacher want you to be involved?

Teachers' expectations vary. Ask your child's teacher what you should do. Should you just check to make sure the assignment is done, or should you do something more? Some teachers want parents to go over the homework and point out errors, while others ask parents to simply check to make sure the assignment is completed. It's also a good idea to ask the teacher to call you if any problems with homework come up.



Be Available.

Elementary school students often like to have someone in the same room when working on assignments in case they have questions. If your child will be cared for by someone else, talk to that person about what you expect regarding homework. For an older child, if no one will be around, let him know you want him to begin work before you get home and call to remind him if necessary.

Look Over Completed Assignments.

It's usually a good idea to check to see that your elementary school child has finished her assignments. If your junior high school student is having trouble finishing assignments, check his too. If you're not there when an assignment is finished, look it over when you get home. After the teacher returns completed homework, read the comments to see if your child has done the assignments satisfactorily.

Monitor Television Viewing.

American children on average spend far more time watching television than they do completing homework. In many homes, more homework gets done when television time is limited. Once you and your child have worked out a homework schedule, take time to discuss how much television and what programs she can watch. It's worth noting that television can be a learning tool. Look for programs that relate to what your child is studying in school, such as programs on history or science or dramatizations of children's literature. When you can, watch shows with your child, discuss them, and encourage follow-up activities such as reading or a trip to the museum.

How To Help: Provide Guidance

The basic rule is, "Don't do the assignments yourself." It's not your homework—it's your child's. "I've had kids hand in homework that's in their parents' handwriting," one Washington, DC-area eighth-grade teacher complains. Doing assignments for your child won't help him understand and use information. And it won't help him become confident in his own abilities.

It can be hard for parents to let children work through problems alone and learn from their mistakes. It's also hard to know where to draw the line between *supporting* and *doing*.

Different teachers have different ideas about the best way for parents to provide guidance. Here are a few suggestions with which most teachers agree:

Figure Out How Your Child Learns Best.

If you understand something about the *style* of learning that suits your child, it will be easier for you to help her.

If you've never thought about this style, observe your child. See if he works better alone or with someone else. If your child gets more done when working with someone else, he may want to complete some assignments with a brother or sister or a classmate. (Some homework, however, is meant to be done alone. Check with the teacher if you aren't sure.)

Other things to consider about learning style:

Does your child learn things best when she can *see* them? If so, drawing a picture or a chart may help with some assignments. For example, after reading her science book, she may not remember the difference between the tibia and the fibula. But by drawing a picture of the leg and labeling the bones, she can remember easily.

Does your child learn things best when he can *hear* them? He may need to listen to a story or have directions read to him. Too much written material or too many pictures or charts may confuse him.

Does your child understand some things best when she can *handle* or *move* them? An apple cut four or six or eight ways can help children learn fractions.

Help Your Child Get Organized.

As mentioned earlier, it's a good idea to set a regular time for children to do homework. Put up a calendar in a place where you'll see it often and record assignments on it. If your child's not able to write yet, then do it for him until he can do it himself. Writing out assignments will get him used to the idea of keeping track of what's due and when. You may want to use an assignment book instead of a calendar.

A bag for books will make it easier to carry homework to and from school. Homework folders in which youngsters can tuck their assignments for safekeeping help many students stay organized.

Encourage Good Study Habits.

Teachers generally give students tips on how to study. But it takes time and practice to develop good habits. You can reinforce these habits at home. For example:

- **Help your child structure time in order to complete assignments.** For example, if your eighth-grader has a biology report due in 3 weeks, discuss all the steps she needs to take to complete it on time, including:

  1. selecting a topic;
  2. doing the research by looking up books and other materials on the topic and taking notes;
  3. figuring out what questions to discuss;
  4. drafting an outline;
  5. writing a rough draft; and
  6. revising and completing the final draft.

  Encourage your child to write down how much time she expects to spend on each step.

- **Help your child get started when he has to do research reports or other big assignments.** Encourage him to use the library. If he isn't sure where to begin, have him ask the librarian for suggestions. If he's using a computer for on-line reference resources—whether the computer's at home, school, or the library—make sure he's getting whatever help he needs to use it properly. As mentioned earlier, many public libraries have homework centers where there are tutors or other kinds of one-on-one assistance. After your child has done the research, listen while he tells you the points he wants to make in the report.

- **Give practice tests.** Help your third-grader prepare for a spelling test by saying the words while she writes them down. Then have her correct her own test.

- **Help your child avoid last-minute cramming.** Review with your fifth-grader how to study for his social studies test well before it's to be given. You can have him work out a schedule of what he needs to do to, make up a practice test, and write down answers to the questions he's made up.

- **Talk with your child about how to take a test.** Be sure she understands how important it is to read the instructions carefully and to keep track of the time and avoid spending too much time on any one question.

Several books and pamphlets listed in the Resources section of this book give more tips on how your child can get organized and develop good study habits.

Talk About the Assignments.

Ask your child questions. Talking can help him think through an assignment and break it down into small, workable parts. Here are some sample questions:

- **Do you understand what you're supposed to do?** After your child has read the instructions, ask her to tell you in her own words what the assignment is about. (If your child can't read yet, the teacher may have sent home instructions that you can read to her.) Some schools have homework hotlines you can call for assignments in case your child misplaced a paper or was absent that day. If your child doesn't understand the instructions, read them with her and talk about the assignment. Are there words she doesn't understand? How can she find out what they mean? If neither you nor your child understands an assignment, call a classmate or contact the teacher.

- **What do you need to do to finish the assignment?** Your child may want to talk through the steps with you (or make a written list of them, if he's able to), as described in the section above on good study habits.

- **Do you need help in understanding how to do your work?** See if your child needs to learn more, for example, about subtracting fractions before she can do her assignment. Or find out if the teacher needs to explain to her again when to use capital and lowercase letters. If you understand the subject yourself, you may want to work through some examples with your child. But let her do the assignment herself.

- **Have you ever done any problems like the ones you're supposed to do right now?** See if your child has already done similar problems that can guide him in completing these particular ones.

- **Do you have everything you need to do the assignment?** Sometimes your child needs special supplies, such as colored pencils, metric rulers, maps, or reference books. As mentioned before, check with the teacher, school guidance counselor, or principal for possible sources of assistance if you can't provide needed supplies; and check with the local public library or school library for books and other information resources.

- **Does your answer make sense to you?** Sometimes the response to a math problem doesn't seem logical, or the meaning of a paragraph your child has written is unclear. If that's the case, your child may need to check over the math problem or revise the paragraph.

If your child is still confused, ask:

- How far have you gotten on the assignment? Let's try to figure out where you're having a problem.

- Do you need to review your notes (or reread a chapter in your textbook) before you do the assignment?

- Are you still having problems? Maybe it would help to take a break or have a snack.

Give Praise.

People of all ages respond to praise. And children need encouragement from the people whose opinions they value most—their parents. "Good first draft of your book report!" or "You've done a great job" can go a long way toward motivating your child to complete assignments.

Children also need to know when they haven't done their best work. Make criticism constructive. Instead of telling a third-grader, "You aren't going to hand in *that* mess, are you?" try, "The teacher will understand your ideas better if you use your best handwriting." Then give praise when a neat version is completed.

How To Help: Talk With Someone at School To Resolve Problems

Homework hassles can often be avoided when parents and caregivers value, monitor, and guide their children's work on assignments. But, sometimes helping in these ways is not enough. Problems can still come up. If they do, the schools, teachers, parents, and students may need to work together to resolve them.

Share Concerns With the Teacher.

You may want to contact the teacher if

- your child refuses to do her assignments, even though you've tried hard to get her to do them;
- instructions are unclear;

- you can't seem to help your child get organized to finish the assignments;
- you can't provide needed supplies or materials;
- neither you nor your child can understand the purpose of assignments;
- the assignments are often too hard or too easy;
- the homework is assigned in uneven amounts—for instance, no homework is given on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday, but on Thursday four of your child's teachers all make big assignments that are due the next day; or
- your child has missed school and needs to make up assignments.

In some cases, the school guidance counselor may be helpful in resolving such problems.

Work With the School.

Communication between teachers and parents is very important in solving homework problems. Here are some important things to remember:

- **Talk with teachers early in the school year.** Get acquainted *before* problems arise, and let

teachers know that you want to be kept informed. Most elementary schools and many secondary schools invite parents to come to parent-teacher conferences or open houses. If your child's school doesn't provide such opportunities, call the teacher to set up a meeting.

- **Contact the teacher as soon as you suspect your child has a homework problem** (as well as when you think he's having any major problems with his schoolwork). Schools have a responsibility to keep parents informed, and you have a right to be upset if you don't find out until report-card time that your child is having difficulties. On the other hand, sometimes parents figure out that a

problem exists before the teacher does. By alerting the teacher, you can work together to solve a problem in its early stages.

- **Request a meeting with the teacher to discuss homework problems.** Tell him briefly why you want to meet. You might say, "Rachel is having trouble with her math homework. I'm worried about why she can't finish the problems and what we might do to help her." Parents for whom English is a second language may need to make special arrangements, such as including another person who is bilingual.

  Don't go straight to the principal without giving the teacher a chance to work out the problem with you and your child.

- **Approach the teacher with a cooperative spirit.** Believe that the teacher wants to help you and your child, even if you disagree about something. It's hard to solve problems if teachers and parents view each other as enemies.

  If you have a complaint, try not to put the teacher on the defensive. For example, avoid saying that you think the assignments are terrible even if you think so. You might say, "I'm glad Calvin is learning to add and subtract in the first grade, but he doesn't want to do his math work sheets. Can we

find another way for him to learn the same material?" This might encourage the teacher to let Calvin (and the rest of his classmates) try another approach. Perhaps he can learn addition and subtraction by moving around buttons, sticks, or shells.

- **Let the teacher know if your child is bored with assignments or finds them too hard or too easy.** (Teachers also like to know when children are particularly excited about an assignment.) Of course, not all homework assignments can be expected to interest your child and be perfectly suited to her. Teachers just don't have time to tailor homework to the individual needs of each student night after night. However, most teachers want to assign homework that children enjoy and can complete successfully, and they welcome feedback from parents.

Many times homework can be structured so that a wide range of children will find assignments interesting. For example:

—Different approaches to the same topic or lesson can be offered to students;

—Extra assignments can be given to students who want more challenge; and

—Specialized assignments can be given to students having trouble in a particular area.

- **While meeting with the teacher, explain what you think is going on.** Also tell the teacher if you don't know what the problem is. Sometimes a child's version of what's going on isn't the same as the teacher's version. For example, your child may tell you that the teacher never explains assignments so he can understand them. But the teacher may tell you that your child isn't paying attention when assignments are given.

- **Work out a way to solve or lessen the problem.** The strategy will depend on what the problem is, how severe it is, and the needs of your child. For instance:

—Is the homework often too hard? Maybe your child has fallen behind and will need extra help from a teacher, parent, or tutor to catch up.

—Does your child need to make up a lot of work because of absences? The first step might be working out a schedule with the teacher.

—Has your child been diagnosed with a learning disability or is one suspected? If so, you'll need to make sure your child gets extra help, and the teacher may need to adjust some assignments. (See Federal Sources of Assistance in the Resources Section of this book.)

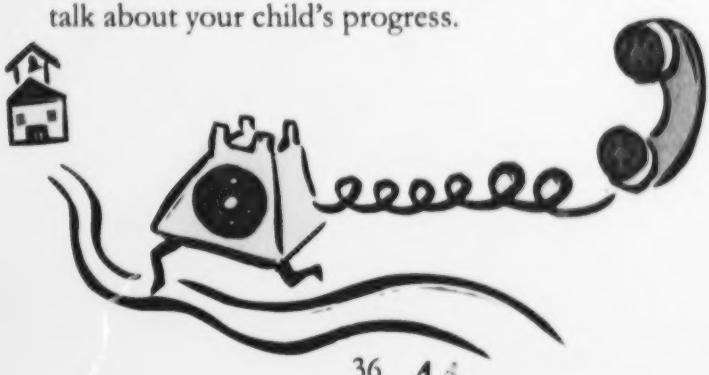
—Does your child need extra support, beyond what home and school can give? Ask the teacher, school guidance counselor, or principal if there are mentor programs in your community. Mentor programs pair a child with an adult volunteer who assists with the youngster's special needs, such as tutoring or career advice. There are many good mentor programs operating in schools, universities, community organizations, churches, and businesses.

- **Make sure communication is clear.** Listen to the teacher and don't leave until you're sure you understand what's being said. Make sure, too, that the teacher understands what *you* have to say. If, after the meeting, you realize you don't understand something, call the teacher to doublecheck.

  It may help to summarize what you've agreed to do at the end of the meeting:

  > OK, so to keep track of Kim's assignments, I'll check her assignment book each night and write my initials by new assignments. Each day you'll check to make sure she's written down all new assignments in her book. That way we'll be certain that I know what her assignments are.

- **Follow up to make sure that the approach you agreed to is working.** If the teacher told you, for example, that your child needs to spend more time practicing long division, check back in a month to talk about your child's progress.



Homework can bring together children, parents, and teachers in a common effort to improve student learning. The younger your child is when you start to do the kinds of activities suggested in this guide, the better.

Helping your child with homework is an opportunity to improve your child's chances of doing well in school and life. By helping your child with homework, you can help him learn important lessons about discipline and responsibility. You can open up lines of communication—between you and your child, and you and the school. You are in a unique position to help your child make connections between school work and the "real world," and thereby bring meaning (and some fun) to your child's homework experience.

Whether you succeed in doing all of the activities suggested in this guide is not what's most important. What's most important is that you are willing to take the time and make the effort to be involved in your child's education.

Resources

The following publications provide more information for parents on ways to approach homework.

American Federation of Teachers (1991). *Home Team Learning Activities for the Early Grades.**

Canter, Lee, and Hauser, Lee, (1987). *Homework Without Tears.* New York: Perennial Library.

Klavan, Ellen (1992). *Taming the Homework Monster.* New York: Poseidon Press.

The National PTA and the National Education Association (1995). *Helping Your Student Get the Most Out of Homework.***

Rich, Dorothy (1988, 1992). *Megaskills: How Families Can Help Children Succeed in School and Beyond.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

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* English and Spanish versions available free in limited quantities by writing: AFT Public Affairs Department, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001.

** Sold in packages of 25 through the National PTA Catalog (item #B307). Call 312–549–3253 or write National PTA Orders, 135 So. LaSalle Street, Dept. 1860, Chicago, IL 60674–1860

Federal Sources of Assistance if Your Child Has a Learning Disability

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education
The Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Library of Congress
Washington, DC 20542

National Institute of Child Care and Human Development
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
31 Center Drive
Building 31, Room 2A32
MSC-2420
Bethesda, MD 20892–2425

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, DC 20013

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

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Parents and caregivers may also wish to learn about an innovative homework program called TIPS (Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork), which was developed at the federally funded Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University. TIPS assignments are designed for elementary and middle grade students to do together with adult family members. Hands-on, interactive assignments that draw on real-life situations have been developed in language arts, math, science, and health. Information is available through the Center's Dissemination Office at Johns Hopkins University, 3505 North Charles St., Baltimore, Maryland 21218.

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See Checklist Inside. . .

In addition to *Helping Your Child With Homework*, the U.S. Department of Education publishes a number of books on related subjects. To find out what's available and how to order, request the *Consumer Information Catalog* listing nearly 200 useful federal publications. The *Catalog* is free from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009.

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Checklist for Helping Your Child With Homework

1. Show You Think Education and Homework Are Important.

- ✔ Do you set a regular time every day for homework?
- ✔ Does your child have the papers, books, pencils, and other things needed to do assignments?
- ✔ Does your child have a fairly quiet place to study with lots of light?
- ✔ Do you set a good example by reading and writing yourself?
- ✔ Do you stay in touch with your child's teachers?

2. Monitor Assignments.

- ✔ Do you know what your child's homework assignments are? How long they should take? How the teacher wants you to be involved?
- ✔ Do you see that assignments are started and completed?
- ✔ Do you read the teacher's comments on assignments that are returned?
- ✔ Is TV viewing cutting into your child's homework time?

3. Provide Guidance.

- ✔ Do you understand and respect your child's style of learning? Does he work better alone or with someone else? Does he learn best when he can see things, hear them, or handle them?
- ✔ Do you help your child to get organized? Does your child need a calendar or assignment book? A bag for books and a folder for papers?
- ✔ Do you encourage your child to develop good study habits (e.g., scheduling enough time for big assignments; making up practice tests)?
- ✔ Do you talk with your child about homework assignments? Does she understand them?

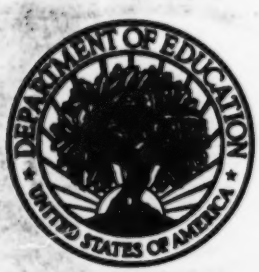
4. Talk With Someone at School When Problems Come Up.

- ✔ Do you meet the teacher early in the year *before* any problems arise?
- ✔ If a problem comes up, do you meet with the teacher?
- ✔ Do you cooperate with the teacher and your child to work out a plan and a schedule to fix homework problems?
- ✔ Do you follow up with the teacher and with your child to make sure the plan is working?

The National Education Goals

The GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, signed by President Clinton on March 31, 1994, sets into law eight National Education Goals for the year 2000:

- All children in America will start school ready to learn.
- The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
- All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our Nation's modern economy.
- The Nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
- U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.
- Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.



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